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history. One can hope that perhaps his promised broader account of the East African campaign for this same series will remedy this oversight.

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The 1st Royal Irish Rifles in the Great War. By James W. Taylor. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002. ISBN 1-85182-702-1. Maps. Photographs. Appendices. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 363. \$29.95. Available from ISBS, Portland, Oregon, tel: 503-287-3093.

Our much-improved understanding of Irish involvement in the Great War over the past fifteen years has been driven by two distinct groups within the historical community: first, those full-time academic historians, such as Keith Jeffery, David Fitzpatrick, and Timothy Bowman, whose important work has addressed both the operational and socio-economic aspects of the conflict; and secondly, a growing band of nonprofessional historians who have concentrated largely on military matters. The quality of the output of this second group inevitably varies, ranging from the outstanding, such as Terence Denman's study of the 16th (Irish) Division, to, on occasion, the distinctly ordinary. Happily this examination by Dublin civil servant James Taylor of the experience of the 1st Royal Irish Rifles, a regular battalion which served on the western front virtually throughout the war, belongs firmly at the upper end of this spectrum.

The book—written partly in memory of Taylor's great-uncle, killed with the battalion—has two sections. The first is a condensed but detailed history of the Rifles' operational service (including Neuve Chapelle, the Somme, Third Ypres, and St Quentin), based largely on war diaries but fleshed out by extensive quotations from the papers of officers and others who served with it, supported by a series of appendices on issues such as casualties, decorations and discipline. The second part, running to 130 pages, consists of short biographies of over 250 officers who served in the battalion, drawing where possible on individuals' service records in the Public Record Office in London.

Of their nature, books of this sort can be of limited appeal to those without a specific interest in the unit concerned. Taylor's focus is certainly narrowly on the 1st Rifles, with the wider context of its battles and the doings of other units sketched in only to the extent needed to make sense of the narrative. Three things give the book a more general interest, however. First, the operational section is well written and the first-hand accounts are successfully integrated with the lists of events: the overall effect is to remind us of the remorseless, grinding nature of operations on the Western Front and the particular grimness of 1915 for the ill-equipped and under-strength units of the original BEF. Second, more general themes—such as the steady decline in the battalion's Irish identity because of falling recruitment at home, the impact on discipline and effectiveness of heavy casualties or fre-

quent changes of commanding officer, and the growing sophistication of the British Army's tactics—are touched on, even if not always as fully explored as one might have wished. Third, the book contains a mass of detailed information, biographical and operational, which can be quarried by others without access to the original sources and which has wider relevance to the British Army's experience of the war. This book therefore represents both a very useful addition to the history of Irish involvement in the Great War, and a worthy tribute to those killed serving with the battalion.

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Britain, France, and the Financing of the First World War. By Martin Horn. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-7735-2293-X. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. 249. \$75.00.

Martin Horn's work is an extremely well-researched, detailed appraisal of how Britain and France sought to finance their war effort in World War I. This topic is important, as oftentimes historians gloss over the purchasing of war material through general references to the procurement of goods from the United States by the Entente powers. Horn's book reveals the intricacies of coalition strategy at the financial level and demonstrates that the operation to fund the war by Britain and France was, on the whole, a disunified one.

Fully two-thirds of Horn's work focuses on issues of finance between the outbreak of war and the end of 1915. This approach is understandable, given that Horn seeks to show that the financial efforts of Britain and France were handicapped by prewar economic policies that prevented a truly unified policy. The economies of Britain and France were largely decentralized and consequently not geared to the prosecution of a long war where the need to fund large, conscript armies was vital to victory. In addition, the two nations had been long-time economic rivals. Upon the outbreak of war, these two factors weighed heavily on their actions. The belief in a short war partially obviated the drive to centralize their economies in order to establish a unified financial policy for prosecuting the war. Early efforts at collaboration were also handicapped by mutual suspicions harbored by the British and French, particularly the French, that each side sought to gain economic advantage during the war at the expense of the other.

A strength of Horn's coverage of British and French dealings between 1914 and 1915 is the distinction he makes between purchasing efforts among the Entente powers themselves and those involving countries abroad, mainly the United States. As domestic stocks of war material began to wane along with the belief in a short war, the Entente increasingly turned to the neutral United States for supplies. These efforts, as with those on the domestic front, were marked by difficulty, as private American investors favored